

during the 1860s and 1870s with their donations of large natural history collections from India. Another period of significant growth in accessions from South Asia, especially of bats and primates, occurred under the enthusiastic tenure of the great mammalogist G.M. Allen as Curator of the MCZ, Mammal Department (during 1924-1942). More recent additions to the collection have included specimens procured during expeditions to Nepal and Pakistan in the 1950s.

There is one name-bearing type series of a South Asian mammal at the MCZ — the holotype and paratype of *Pteropus ariel* (= *P. giganteus ariel*) described by G.M. Allen (1908) from the Maldives (see Helgen and McFadden, 2001:141). The department holds topotypes of many mammalian taxa from the region, including *Budorcas taxicolor*, *Capra falconeri cashmiriensis*, *Soriculus caudatus*, *S. nigrescens*, *Niviventer niviventer monticola*, *Niviventer eha* and *Miniopterus pusillus*. Additionally, the collection also contains specimens of a large

number of South Asian mammals that are rarely collected.

In the list, taxonomy follows Wilson and Reeder (1993); common names follow Wilson and Cole (2000); where these names deviate from Prater (1948), that author's common names are given in parentheses.

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2. LITTLE GREBE *TACHYBAPTUS RUFICOLLIS*: AN ADDITION TO THE AVIFAUNA OF LADAKH

On the morning of July 1, 1999 between 1000 and 1030 hrs, three adult little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* in summer plumage were observed at Trishul Tso, a small lake created by the Army, near the headquarters of the Ladakh Scouts on the Leh-Srinagar road. The birds were immediately recognised as little grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, a species familiar to the observers. On July 3, 1999 only one bird was

recorded at the lake. HSS checked for the birds again at the lake on July 9, 1999, but none were sighted.

There are no previously documented records of little grebe from Ladakh to the best of our knowledge. Ali and Ripley (1981), Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Kazmierczak and van Perlo (2000) do not mention this area in the species' distribution.



Fig. 1a-b: Lesser frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Gray in the Kole wetlands of Thrissur, Kerala

The upper limit of the species is variously recorded as 1,800 m (Ali and Ripley 1981), 2,500 m (Ali 1996) and 1,372 m (Fleming *et al.* 1984) for the Indian subcontinent. Interestingly, the site where the birds were observed is at an elevation of *c.* 3,500 m, considerably exceeding the record from Rara Lake in Nepal on April 1, 1976 at 3,050 m (Inskipp and Inskipp 1991).

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3. SIGHTING OF LESSER FRIGATEBIRD *FREGATA ARIEL* GRAY
IN THE KOLE WETLANDS OF THRISSUR, KERALA

(With one plate)

Kole wetland in Thrissur district is one of the important wintering grounds for migratory birds coming to Kerala. The area lies in between 10° 20' - 10° 40' N and 75° 58' - 76° 11' E, extending to about 11,000 ha. Kole wetlands are situated below sea level and paddy is cultivated during the months of October to April, after draining water. During monsoon (June to September) the whole area is inundated. As a part of ecological studies on wetland birds initiated in 1998, we have been surveying the area regularly. During the period, a lesser frigatebird *Fregata ariel* Gray was recorded from Guruvayur, Thrissur district on June 16, 2000. The place is situated on

the west coast and is about 4 km away from the sea. Local people noticed a live bird and brought it to the Thrissur Zoo. On examination, the bird was identified as an adult female of the lesser frigatebird. The bird had a black head and red eye rings, black throat and white breast extending into a complete collar around the neck. The bird stayed alive for a week in the zoo, after which it was skinned and preserved.

Only a few sighting details of the lesser frigatebird are reported from Kerala State. Ferguson and Bourdillon (1904) recorded it from Trivandrum. Ali (1984) has not reported the species from Kerala. Faizi (1985) reported the